



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

January 14, 2005

# News Release

## **DEFENDANT PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTING TO EXPORT 200 AK-47s TO COLOMBIAN PARAMILITARIES**

MIAMI, FLA. – Marcos Daniel Jiménez, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; Jesus Torres, Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); Julie Torres, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); and Robert E. Harris, Special Agent-in-Charge, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), announced today that defendant, **Guillermo Cardoso-Arias**, pleaded guilty late yesterday before United States District Court Judge James I Cohn, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Cardoso-Arias pleaded guilty to a two-count Indictment, charging him with knowingly engaging and attempting to engage in the business of brokering activities with respect to the export of 200 AK-47 fully automatic assault rifles, in violation of Title 22, United States Code, Section 2778, and attempting to export 200 fully automatic AK-47 assault rifles without a license, in violation of Title 22, United States Code, Section 2778. The defendant faces a maximum statutory sentence of 10 years in prison per count.

In law enforcement monitored and recorded conversations, Cardoso-Arias asserted that he was purchasing the 200 AK-47 fully automatic assault rifles on behalf of the Colombian "Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia" ("AUC"), known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia. The defendant further stated in the referenced conversations that the weapons would be used to fight the Colombian "Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia" ("FARC"), known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

The defendant explained that there was a need for a lot of AK-47s because they are lighter and easier to handle than other weapons when climbing the mountains of Colombia. Both the AUC and FARC have been designated by the U.S. State Department as terrorist organizations.

Mr. Jiménez commended the investigative efforts of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and Defense Criminal Investigative Service. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael Walleisa.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security*